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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001173

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DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, IO, IO/T, INL/C/CJ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/14/2014

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [AORC](#) [PREL](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: IN THE ABSENCE OF US ATTENDANCE, COLOMBO PLAN
MEMBERS APPROVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT IN TEHRAN

REF: A. COLOMBO-SA/INS 07-14-04 FAX

[1](#)B. COLOMBO 940 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead. Reasons 1.5(b,d)

[1](#)1. (U) This is an Action Request -- Please see Para 7.

[1](#)2. (SBU) COLOMBO PLAN ADOPTS AMENDMENT: Mission received the minutes (Ref A) from the Colombo Plan's 39th Consultative Committee Meeting (CCM) which was held June 15-16, 2004 in Tehran (the U.S. did not attend because of the venue), in which the organization notes that the proposed amendment, discussed at the November 18, 2003 Special Session in Colombo, was approved. The single sentence says, "The Consultative Committee adopted the proposed amendment to the Constitution of the Colombo Plan." While there is no further description of the amendment, the sentence refers to the proposal to restrict training opportunities to member states more than four years in arrears, until a partial payment of back dues is made. The Colombo Plan Secretary-General Kittipan Kanjanapipatkul confirmed to the Ambassador on July 13 that this much-discussed, U.S.-opposed amendment had been adopted during the CCM in Tehran.

[1](#)3. (C) During their July 13 conversation, the Ambassador expressed to the Secretary-General his surprise and disappointment that the amendment had been approved. The Ambassador specifically recalled to Kanjanapipatkul their June 8 discussion (Ref B), in which he clearly stated that the USG did not support the amendment and it would be against U.S. wishes for the CCM to approve the amendment and only note United States opposition. "Where is the consensus (the hallmark of Colombo Plan decisions) in that?" the Ambassador asked. The Secretary-General responded that the Colombo Plan Secretariat had only an advisory capacity and that the member

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states made decisions. As hosts, the Iranians chaired the meeting, Kanjanapipatkul said.

[1](#)4. (C) Further, the Secretary-General renewed his comment that the member states had in fact already approved the amendment during the 38th CCM in July 2001 in Colombo, which included USG participation. As requested by the 38th CCM, the member states now were only deciding how to lessen the severity of the penalty. (The proposed amendment was then changed from complete payment of arrears to partial payment.) The Ambassador replied that this was not a convincing argument for the reasoning behind the 39th CCM's adoption of the amendment in Tehran. The Secretary-General added that the situation regarding non-payment of dues was becoming critical. Bangladesh had just notified the Plan that it would no longer pay its dues -- but it still expected to be able to participate in Plan programs!

[1](#)5. (C) In a July 14 call to poloff, the Secretary-General's Executive Assistant Yasmin Raheem provided additional background on the June 15-16 CCM. Raheem said that the Secretariat had provided detailed information to the CCM

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regarding the history of the proposed amendment. In addition, the Colombo Plan President had noted to the CCM participants that one of the member countries opposed the proposed amendment. Separately, Raheem added that the Secretary-General was considering convening a working group

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within the Council to further discuss the amendment, but intended to evaluate such a possibility with the President first.

[1](#)6. (C) USG OPTIONS: We see three possible options to take in response to the amendment adoption in Tehran. One option is to push the Secretary-General to convene a working group and reopen discussions on the amendment. Another option would be for the United States to consider withdrawing from the Colombo Plan and/or cease funding the organization's activities, such as those related to the organization's Drug Awareness Program (DAP). A third option would be for the USG to make a statement at the July 21 Council meeting to be held in Colombo that the CCM's actions are a violation of precedent, did not occur in the spirit of "reaching agreement

by consensus" (according to its constitution) and set no precedent for the United States in the multi-lateral context.

17. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Before the July 21 Council meeting, Mission requests Department guidance on any course of action to take in the Council regarding the adoption of the amendment. Mission suggests that a statement before the Council, as alluded to in the third option above, would be the best approach. While a working group on the subject might seem most favorable, none of the other 25 member states have wavered from their support for the amendment. Therefore, it is unlikely that further discussion on the amendment will elicit support for alternative proposals to enforce payment of annual dues. The least desirable option would be to withdraw from the organization or reduce USG funding of DAP activities, given the strong track record of success in this area. END ACTION REQUEST.

18. (U) Minimize considered.
LUNSTEAD